

# FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE

## Colville National Forest Summer 2015

### A MESSAGE FROM LAURA JO WEST COLVILLE FOREST SUPERVISOR



Our planning team has been working closely for the past few months with the Pacific Northwest regional office of the Forest Service to review the draft forest plan and draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). As soon as our documents have been reviewed by the regional office and our Washington DC office, they will be released for public review and comment. It has been a long time coming and we eagerly look forward to that day!

I am proud of the work our planning team has done to bring the project to this point. It is a culmination of many years of hard work, public involvement, and close coordination with our local communities, tribes, and partners. We look forward to sharing the draft forest plan with you so we can continue the discussions about how to best manage the Colville National Forest into the future.

While forest leaders and planning team members will be shepherding this plan to its final version, I will no longer be part of that process. I recently accepted the Forest Supervisor position on the Coconino National Forest in Flagstaff, Arizona and will be making that move at the end of July. I am looking forward to new challenges and opportunities, but I will deeply miss the Colville National Forest, its dedicated employees, and the local communities it serves. This is a very special place and I am grateful to have been part of it.

Rodney Smoldon has been selected by the Regional Forester to fill in as the interim Forest Supervisor upon my departure. Rodney is well-rooted in our communities and is familiar with our forest planning process. His experience will ensure a seamless transition for the new Forest Supervisor when that person is selected. Between Rodney and our capable planning team, the Colville National Forest and the forest planning process is in good hands.

I wish all of you the best as you move forward in this important conversation about the future of the Colville National Forest. Thank you for your interest and willingness to be part of this process.



**Laura Jo West,**  
**Colville Forest**  
**Supervisor**

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## Frequently Asked Questions- Colville Forest Plan Revision

**Q. What is a Land Management Plan (Forest Plan)?** A forest plan establishes key decisions for the long-term management of a national forest. It is the main document that guides Forest decision-making with respect to managing natural resources (e.g. soil, water, vegetation, and ecosystems) and human uses (e.g. recreation, thinning, livestock grazing, firewood gathering, special uses permits, and opportunities for solitude) of the Colville National Forest (*The Forest*).

**Q. Why are you revising the Forest Plan?** The Forest is proposing to revise its 1988 plan as required by law (National Forest Management Act) and regulation (36 CFR 219). Every national forest must revise its land management plan every 10-15 years or when conditions or demands in the area covered by the plan have changed significantly; or when changes in agency policies, goals or objectives would have a significant effect on forest level programs; and when monitoring and evaluation indicate revision is necessary.

**Q. Why does it take so long?** Revising a forest plan is a complex, multi-year process where the Forest must meet certain national criteria provided in the 1982 Planning Rule in the plan development process. The Forest also seeks to collaborate and gather substantive input from interested public, counties, tribes and state and federal agencies on a plan that will support restoring and improving the resiliency of the Forest's ecosystems, and infrastructure and contribute to the economic sustainability of adjacent communities for the next 10-20 years. This work takes time, and many people are interested in the management of their national forests. It also takes a substantial effort to gather current science and gather updated data on current conditions in order to develop the draft revised forest plan and analyze the alternatives in the environmental analysis.

**Q. What parts of the current (1988) forest plan might be retained?** We've learned a lot about what works or doesn't work from implementing the plan over the past 17 years. We are not starting from scratch on this revision. Many parts of the current forest plan are working well, and may be retained with little to no change. Other parts may require a little more "tune-up" to bring them up to date with current science or contemporary management approaches. Other parts of the plan may require more of an overhaul, to incorporate policy changes related to sensitive or endangered species or forest or watershed health concerns. Other aspects of the draft plan may entail considering new proposals, such as possible recommendations for additional wilderness, or other management areas that aren't currently reflected in the current plan.

**Q. Will there be any changes to boundaries or management of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness?** The Salmo-Priest Wilderness was designated by Congress and, no changes to the boundary and management of that area are proposed in any of the alternatives. However, the range of alternatives does reflect varying levels of Recommended Wilderness across the Forest. Areas identified as Recommended Wilderness in the alternatives would require designation by Congress before they became part of the National Wilderness system. Management of areas identified as Recommended Wilderness varies under the different alternatives with some alternatives allowing existing mechanized and motorized uses to continue, and some alternatives including removal of mechanized and motorized uses (until such time that Congress may act on the recommendation).

Timeframe	Colville National Forest-Milestones and Next Steps to A Revised Forest Plan
<b>2003-2011</b>	The Forest identified a need for action and developed the Proposed Action with collaborative input from interested public, counties, tribes and partner agencies. Initial public outreach and pre-scoping effort accomplished working in coordination with the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF. Scoping begins: Proposed Action released for public comment, public meetings held, comments analyzed.
<b>2012-2015</b>	Revision team considers scoping comments and identifies issues, issues approved by Regional Forester. Alternatives to the Proposed Action are developed using the issues identified from Scoping. Effects to social, economic, and natural resources are analyzed. Forest separate planning efforts in 2014.
Estimate 2015-2016, pending Internal review & approval to release for public review.	Draft EIS and Proposed Revised Colville Forest Plan released for public comment. Information sessions planned. All comments received during the comment period will be analyzed and considered when finalizing the Forest Plans and DEIS. Engagement with interested parties, other agencies, Tribes, and public continues.
	Following release of the DEIS (once comments and any potential changes are considered or incorporated), a Notice of Availability for Final EIS and Forest Plan and Objection Process Begins. Once resolution of Objections has been reached a Record of Decision would be signed.

### Subscribe to the Contact List

To stay on the contact list for updates or to update your contact information, please self-subscribe to our new electronic message system:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan>

For more information please visit the project webpage: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan-revision](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan-revision)

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